In the Specification:

Please amend the paragraph at page 3, lines 26-30, as set forth below:

Moreover, said oxidizing gas can include one or more ~~gasses~~ gases selected from a group of O_2, N_2O, NO and ~~NO_2.~~ NO_2, said reducing gas can be H_2 gas, and H_2 concentration inside said processing container can be 40% or below, according to another invention of the present application.

Please amend the paragraph at page 6, line 19 through page 7, line 3, as set forth below:

The gases supplied from the nozzle 32 and 40 respectively thus flow up through the wafer-accommodating region, i.e. the processing space S inside the inner tube 4, and back down from the ceiling part to flow through the clearance between the inner tube 4 and outer tube 6 and are then discharged. In addition, an exhaust vent 50 is provided in the bottom sidewall of the outer tube 6, and a vacuum vent system 56 provided by inserting a vacuum pump 54 in an exhaust line 52 is connected to this exhaust vent 50, thereby evacuating the air inside the processing container 8. At this point, a distance H1 between the wafer-accommodating region as the processing space S and each gas feed location, more specifically the distance H1 between the lower-end portion of the wafer-accommodating region i.e. the lower-end portion of the wafer boat 10 and the gas outlet at the end of each of the nozzles 32 and 40, is spaced apart by a predetermined distance. The purposes of providing the distance H1 in this way is firstly to preheat the gasses by heat radiation from the processing container 8 which is heated by a heater 62 and provides a hot-wall condition while each gas flows upwardly by the distance H1, and secondly to fully mix both the ~~gasses~~ gases while both of the ~~gasses~~ gases flow upwardly through the distance H1.

Please amend the paragraph at page 15, lines 28-31, as set forth below:

> Although the above embodiment was explained by exemplifying a case wherein O_2 gas is used as an oxidizing gas and H_2 gas is used as a reducing gas, the oxidizing gas may be one or more ~~gasses~~ gases selected from a group of O_2, N_2O, NO and NO_2.

Please amend the paragraph at page 15, line 32 through page 16, line 3, as set forth below:

> In this case again, active oxygen species and active hydroxyl species produced in the course of combustion of the reducing gas mainly contribute to the oxidation reaction on wafer surfaces, as previously described. When the above ~~gasses~~ gases, besides O_2 gas and H_2 gas, are used, the processing conditions such as the temperature of the wafers and processing pressure may also be set in nearly the same way as those previously described for the case in which O_2 gas and H_2 gas are used.

Please amend the paragraph at page 7, lines 4-13, as follows:

> The distance H1 therefore is determined to be 100 mm or above, preferably 300 mm or above, for example which allow the fed oxidizing gas and reducing gas to be fully mixed without causing an adverse ~~affect~~ effect on the temperature distribution in the wafer-accommodating region (processing space S). Besides, a heat-insulating layer 60 is provided around the outer circumference of the processing container 8, and the heater 62 is provided on the inner side of this heat-insulating layer 60 as a heating means, thereby heating wafers W located inside the heat-insulating layer 60 to a predetermined temperature.